THE

ROYAL CHARGE.

A

SERMON,

PROVING

The KNOWLEDGE of GOD,

(*A GUIDE to PRINCES,*)

To be moſt Excellent in its ſelf, and Neceſſary to Us.

By *S. A.*

JOHN XVII.

And this is Eternal Life to know thee, the only true GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST, *whom thou haſt ſent.*

SALOP:

Printed for the Author, by JOHN ROGERS, Bookſeller in the *High ſtreet.*

M DCC XV.

9

Thomas Bratton's Book 1733

THE EPISTLE.

MY BRETHEREN,

AS I am prevail'd upon to Publiſh this Diſcourſe, ſo it is principaly for your ſake and ſervice, in whoſe Churches I have labour'd, in City, and Country, with deſire, it may obtain with many, more elaborately to Study the Knowledge of God, who alone is the End and Happineſs of Man.

And as God is the Sum of all Beauty and Excellency, there is not any thing fitter to be Lamented in our days, than that wilfull Ignorance of him which Men generally affect to live in, conſidering, the miſchiefs and miſery, that Ignorance of God is productive of, which amongſt many, are Profaneſs, and Rebellion, Popery and Slavery

We are deeply ſenſible, that GOD, the Great Governour of the World, has ſent us a King (a Man after his own Heart) the Man of our deſire, who is determin'd to Rule for the good of all his People. Of which his Mild and Gentle Government hitherto is a full proof and pledge. Yet, how is he maligned, and oppoſed by an Open and Unnatural Rebellion, which may uſher in unaccountable Miſeries on this Nation, if the Watchful Providence of GOD over us, does not prevent? And if thoſe things are, becauſe Men know not the Lord.

Then let us in this Evil Day engage the Lord, by our fervent Prayer, and as Jacob did (if poſſible) prevail, that he will long preſerve our Sovereign Lord King GEORGE, *in his Perſon and Government; that he would diſappoint all his Enemies, compoſe the unſettled Minds of his People, and eſtabliſh the Nations in Peace, and in the Love and Practice of Piety and Loyalty, that it may appear, God is known to the Ends of our Earth.* Amen.

S. A.

Namptwich, Novemb. 1715.

THE

A SERMON,

PROVING

The Knowledge of God, moſt Excellent in its ſelf, and Neceſſary to Us.

From 1 CHRON. xxviii, 9.

And thou Solomon, *my Son, know thou the GOD of thy Father, and ſerve him,* &c.

THere is not any thing which the Ingenious among the Sons and Daughters of Men, do naturally thirſt after more, then knowledge. But as it was with our Firſt Parents under the Charms of a guilded Temptation, ſo it is the folly and miſery of Mortals, that they are by Nature prone to purſue the knowledge of things, that are of no great worth, while they neglect that, which only is Neceſſary and excellent, which is, the Knowledge of God, even that which is recommended in our Words to *Solomon*, and in him to every one of us, *know thou the God of thy Father.*

IN the Context you have a Relation of one of the most great and glorious *Assemblies* that we ever read of (right Noble and Honourable) the King, his Princes, the Attendants of his Royal Person, his Treasurers, the Officers of his Household with the Captains of his Army, his Generals, the Mighty and the Valiant as *vers.* 1. Then you have that which is well worthy of Note, and enough to engage our most Awful regard and diligent attention, and that is, The *King turning Preacher*, vers 2. Where you have his *posture*, *he stood*, which was doubtless an Expression both of his reverence of God, and respect to his Auditory. Then you have *his Compellations*, *my Brethren*, *my People*, signifying his great Affection, and a grateful sense of the Lords intention, in advancing him above 'em all, which was not, that he should treat them, as *Slaves and Vassals*, as some others from bad principles, and as bad councels have most apparently done, to the great damage, as well of themselves, as of their People; but to Govern 'em, with the Love and Heart of a *Brother*. It being the Will of God, that Kings *should not be lifted up* by Pride, under their high Advancement, but that they should be fill'd with an Affectionate concern for the Weal and Interest of their People, and thereby to prove themselves, *The Ministers of GOD for good to them*; As *David* appear'd to be, by his Intimate and Pathetick Expressions, *My Brethren, my People*. And who in *Britain* will not praise the God of Heaven, for giving us a King (*David* like, *a Man after his own Heart*) who reckons upon the *Prerogative* safe and secure, in nothing more, than in maintaining his People their *Rights* and *Priviledges*. Let us therefore pray, that God would continue, to make him no less Pious than *David*, and his beloved Son, no less Wise than *Solomon*, but more constant in serving the Lord, than *Solomon* was.

Deut. xvii, 20.

Rom. xiii, 4.

YOU

YOU have then, the Sermon it ſelf, which the Royal Prophet and Preacher delivered. It is not long, but very copious, and full of Divine and Excellent matter. It may be divided into three parts, *Firſt*, A very grateful Reflection, on ſomething paſt, or a Relation of what God had done for him, *Above all his Fathers Houſe, in chooſing him* to fill up the Throne, and *to be King for ever*, vers 4. Alſo, ſomething which *David* had determin'd to do for God, and that was, *To build the Lord a Houſe for the Ark of the Covenant*, vers 2. From whence obſerve, That it is the Property of the truly Vertuous, and Ingenious, for whom God hath done much in a way of *Mercy*, to reſolve on doing what they can for God, in a way of *Duty*, if God promotes them to honour, they will honour him.

But, tho' *David* was thus bravely determin'd in love to God, and to advance his Intereſt, yet, the Lord diſmiſſes him from that ſervice, and the reaſon why he denies him the honour of ſuch a performance, was, *Becauſe he had been a Man of War, and had ſhed blood*, vers 3. And from hence we may Note, That there is not any ſo capable of doing the Lord great and good ſervice, nor any whom the Lord chuſes thereto, rather, then Men of Peace.

But, tho' God forbad *David* to build his Houſe on that Account, yet, he ſo kindly accepted his good intention, that he would employ his Son *Solomon*, whom he had choſen to ſucceed him on the Throne, *To build his Houſe and Courts*, which the Lord had diſcover'd unto him; yea more, *That he had choſen* Solomon *to be his Son*, and that God himſelf *would be his Father*, who further ſays, *I will Eſtabliſh his Kingdom for ever. If he be conſtant to do my Commandments and Judgements, as at this day*, verſ. 5 6, 7. *Secondly*, Something is propoſed by *David* the Kingly Preacher, to be obſerved, and done

done by this Honourable and Auguſt Aſſembly, which he gives in charge to them, with the greateſt Solemnity, and that is, *That they ſeek for, and keep all the Commandments of the Lord their God*, and as that is a Duty of the higheſt moment, ſo he enforces it by Arguments moſt pregnant and endearing, as ſuch a courſe moſt directly tends, not only to their own Weal and Tranquility, but as thereby, they will lay a good foundation for their Children alſo, and therefore he adds as a Reaſon why they ſhould ſeek, and keep his Commandments, *That ye may poſſeſs this good land, and leave it for an Inheritance for your Children after you, for ever*, verſ. 8. Then more particularly he offers ſomething to his Son *Solomon* to be obſerved by him, which are the things contain'd in the 9*th* and 10*th* Verſes. Thereupon, *Thirdly*, You have a diſtribution of the Materials, and *David*'s particular directions to his Son *Solomon*, in Order to his performing and fulfilling this Service, of Building the Lord a Houſe, whereunto he was choſen. From the 10th Verſe to the end. For which purpoſe there is not any thing more requiſite for him to obſerve and do, than what is propos'd in the text, which is the *knowledge of God*, for while Men are ignorant of him, they will not be careful to pleaſe, nor ſtudious to ſerve him. And therefore, *Thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him.*

The Words are *Davids* Directory to his Son *Solomon*, or they contain a ſolemn charge of a Royal and loving Father, to a choſen and beloved Son. The thing given in Charge, or the Duty enjoyn'd is of the higheſt Moment and Conſequence in the World, to all ranks of Perſons, *Know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him.* By which phraſe we have *David* propoſing to *Solomon*, as alſo, to our own Study and knowledge, the only true God, as he alone is worthy of our Service.

NEXT follows, the manner, how God must be served, and that is, *With a perfect and willing mind*, as if he had said, with our whole heart, not as *Israel* did, *whose heart was divided*, which was their great fault, but with an entire and undivided Soul and Affection. The same heart which our Blessed Saviour requires us to love God with, *David* here requires us, to serve him with, *And a willing mind*, that is cheerfully, and with alacrity, being ready like the Angels of Heaven, to put in Execution whatsoever the Lord hath given us Commandment for. Gods will must not be disputed, but done by us, without either Murmuring or Whimpering. We must not move in the way of duty dumpishly, and heavily, like the stupid Ox, that needs the Goad, or the dull Horse that wants the Spur, to quicken him: but with readiness of mind. God values not the Service that is hal'd and forc'd from us, but that which proceeds from integrity of heart, and willingness of mind, is, what he regards and accepts. *Mat.* xxii, 37.

The Arguments by which *David* enforces the Duty as a Father on *Solomon* his Son, and as Gods Minister, on every one of us, are taken. *First*, from Gods *Omniscience*, his perfect knowledge and understanding of all things, even those which lye hid and covered quite out of the sight of Men. *For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the Imagination of every thought.* This is peculiar to him, whose property it is, and his only, to know the hearts of all the Children of Men. By this *David* notably cautions us, that we be no less zealous at home, than abroad, as truly Religious and virtuous in Private, as we appear to be in Publick, that we be uniform and all of a piece. It is granted, by shew and appearance we may deceive one another, and by putting on a Christian guize, we may pass for wise Virgins with Men, when as in truth, *1 Sam.* xvi, 7. *1 Kings* viii, 39.

truth, if we be not ſincerely pious, God who ſearches the heart, does right well know that we are but fooliſh ones, Hypocrites and Pretenders. His piercing Eye looks through every Viſard into the ſecret receſſes of the Soul. He knows whether we be ſincere or no. There's no Impoſing on him, he cannot be deceiv'd. The

Second Argument is taken from the great Priviledge and happineſs that will attend us, in the way of our duty, and on the other hand, from the greatneſs of the miſery, in caſe we diſobey the Lord, either by Committing things he hath forbidden us to do, or wilfully omitting thoſe he has Commanded, *If thou ſeek him*, that is, if thou ſeek him only, heartily, humbly, fiducially, reſolvedly and conſtantly, then *he will be found by thee*, i. e. He will hear thy Prayers, grant thy Requeſts, he will guide and counſel thee; he will aid and ſtrengthen thee, he will Confirm and Eſtabliſh thee, (*and thy Kingdom for ever*) yea, he will crown thee with the Bleſſings of his favour, and make thee proſperous and happy. But on the contrary; *If thou forſake him*, that is, If thou forſake his Law, his Houſe, his appointed ſervice, or if thou quitteſt and forſakeſt Religion and Piety in the courſe of thy life, by running retrograde, giving way to Sin, Prophaneſs, and Impiety, which is a forſaking of God, *He will caſt thee off for ever.* He will caſt thee out of his love and favour, deny thee his bleſſed Protection, withold from thee the good of his bleſſing, leave thee to the Conduct of thy own heart, to walk in the way of thine eyes; till at laſt he pulls up the Floodgates of his wrath, lets fall the deluge of his vengeance upon thee, making thee unhappy and miſerable for ever. Theſe things I adviſe thee of, and moſt affectionately I exhort and charge thee, nay, I deſire & recommend to thee my Son, (my People, my hearers) from

from my own experience of the mercy and Justice, the Goodness and Severity of the Lord, as that which above all other things is most worthy thy serious and constant regard, which is, to study and labour to *know the God of thy Father, and to serve him.* The Knowledge of God, being Necessary to thy serving him, and the Knowledge of his Nature and Will, is requisite to thy serving him aright.

But designing in this Discourse to confine my self, to treat on the Knowledge of God, reserving the service due unto him, as the Subject of another Discourse, I therefore propound by way of Observation.

Doct. That, of all Knowledge attainable in this World, by the Sons and Daughters of Men, *To know God* is most Incumbent on us as it is most *excellent in it self*, and *necessary to Us.*

That it is Incumbent on all, both Prince and People, is certain; As God alone is a suitable and sufficient good, and as Protection, Establishment and Prosperity flows purely from his Favour. And if all true happiness stands in the Knowledge and Enjoyment of him, and of him only, as our Blessed Saviour intimates, saying, *This is Eternal Life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* Joh. xvii. 3. The knowledge of other things are not so absolutely necessary as Men Imagine, it is almost indifferent, whether we do, or not, know the things, that be most in Vogue, and esteem'd most Excellent in this World, as Arts and Science, Philosophy, Astronomy, and the like. There's no necessity we should know the things of Nature, so as to lay open and unfold the Mysteries of them. Nor that we should understand the Heavenly Bo-

dies, as to be able exactly to describe their quality, Form, and Dimension, or to give Account of their Motions and Operation. A Man may be a Philosopher, a Physician, and a Politician, yea, a Man may be a great *Rabbi* (or Doctor) very skilfull and knowing in the Letter of the Scriptures, he may Parraphrase learnedly, and discourse excellently on them, and for all that, may be as Ignorant of God, as the learn'd and prejudic'd Pharisees were of Christ, whilst he personally dwelt amongst them, and gave 'em Ocular and Undeniable proofs of his being the Son of God. And tho' these rare parts, and excellent acquirements have been, and still are (too often) misapply'd. Yet no Man can suppose that God hath not furnish'd him with a Capacity of knowing him, on whom the Knowledge of God is enjoyn'd. No, herein He hath distinguish'd between Man, and all other ranks of his Earthly Workmanship, in giving to him a mind and understanding rightly to conceive of, and to know him under those discoveries he pleas'd in the Methods of his Grace, to make of himself unto us, provided that Prejudice and Unbelief, prevail not upon us, to misaply and abuse the abilities he hath given us. I confess, a total want of knowledge in the things of Nature, is a defect, as thereby we live below the Improvement, yea, the exercise of our Understanding, besides; we loose the pleasure and satisfaction, which arises from ingenuous conversation. But not to know God under the meanes he affords, and the capacity he hath given us, is both sinful and penal. For

To neglect to know him, is, to treat the ever blessed God with the greatest slight and Contempt we are capable. This would be to proclaim him unworthy of our Study, to prefer and account of other things more than him, and to sink the Creator of all, below the level of poor perishing and in-

insignificant things, which is a slight very provoking, and begets a quarrel between us and him, for, tho' he be *the patient God*, loath to enter the lists with his Creatures, he will not always abide silent under such contempt of Mortals. Loath he is, to hang out the Bloody Flag, and to draw his Sword, which, when he doth, as certainly he will one time or other, if they continue incorrigible, and then how such *will maintain the controversie with him*, (who have chosen to live without the Knowledge of him) I know not. *Hos.* iv. 1.

Again, to neglect the Knowledge of God, is to cast the greatest abuse upon our selves Imaginable, as thereby we sink our dignify'd and excellent Nature, below that of the Beast that perishes. It does not only set us upon the level with them, which is our great dishonour, wherefore says *David*, *Be not as the Horse, and the Mule, that have no understanding*. But it sinks us beneath, and declares us to be more sordid than the Brutes, *They know their Owners*, and such who feed them. Or the Birds in the Air, *The Stork knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming*. Therefore, for Man not to know the Lord, may fill both Heaven and Earth with wonder. *Ps.* xxxii 9. *Jer.* viii. 7. *Isai.* i. 2, 3.

Nay, an affected Ignorance of God is to licence our selves, to go on in our evil ways and doings without controle, than which there is not any thing more foolish and desperate that I know of. What, but this, is the true ground and reason why Men are so fruitfull in Sin and Iniquity? Why do Men so multiply their transgressions? abound with pleasure in their Impieties, bringing forth the wild grapes of *Sodom*, by proceeding from one sin to another, as if that were the only business they were design'd for, and sent in to the World to do. Why, it is because *they know not the Lord*, there is *Jer.* ix.

no other reason to be rendred, and that only, the Lord Assignes of Israels running around in Sin. And the Apostle expresly tells us: That *if any Man Sins*, i. e. by Choice and with Allowance, let his Profession and Appearance be what it will, *he knows not God.*

1 Joh. iii 6.

Once more, not to know God, is to run our selves upon the pikes, as an affected and wilful Ignorance of God is destructive and damning. If we prove so base, as to refuse to know him in the Methods of his Grace and Mercy, he will turn our Sin both in its guilt and punishment upon us, by refusing to know, i. e. to approve us, and will make us to know him in the methods of his wrath and fury. For of *Israel*, he says, *they are a People of no Understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour.* But wo to them whom God will not Favour, such he will not endure in his presence. No, he will banish them his Courts, cast 'em on the Billows of his Wrath, and at once be avenged on them for ever, *When Christ shall be reveal'd in flaming Fire, to take vengeance on all who know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.* Thus it appears to be the Duty of all, to know God, whatsoever rank they are of, whether Princes or People. The Method we shall proceed in, is

Isai. xxvii, 11.

2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

I. To inquire, what this Royal and Holy Man *David* means, by knowing God, or what the knowledge of God Imports?

II. To lay open the Excellency of this Knowledge.

III. To shew on what accounts the Knowledge of God is necessary to us. And conclude with a Reflection or two. But

1. By knowing God, *David* cannot intend a personal knowledge, to know him in his Person and Es-

Essence, as we know one another by frequent converse, and distinct views we have of the Features of each other. We have no such knowledge of Men, who reside in the remote, and unknown parts of the World, whom we neither have seen, nor can see; much less of Blessed Angels in Heaven, and least of all can we thus know God, the Creator of those blessed Spirits, whose Perfections and Excellencies raise him so far above conception, as that neither Men, nor Angels can by the most diligent search, *find him out unto Perfection.* For so resplendent is his Glory, that they cannot behold it, but do *cover their Faces with their Wings.* Therefore, such knowledge (at least in this Life) is too high for us, since he hath said, *No man shall see my face, and live.* So, that to know God in this sense is not made our duty in the Text.

Job xi, 7, 8. *Isai.* vi, 2. *Exod.* xxxiii, 20.

Nor must we understand that *David,* by knowing the Lord intends, that we should know him perfectly and fully. 'Tis more possible, a Man should number the Stars of Heaven, and grasp the Waters of the vast Ocean in his fist, than that he should attain to a full and perfect knowledge of him, who is Infinite, Incomprehensible, and whose Excellencies *have exalted him above all Heavens.* To know God thus, is what St. *Paul* never pretended to, tho' enabled with extraordinary Revelations, who tells us, that our sight and knowledge of him here, *is but in part, and that we see but through a glass darkly.* 'Tis true, in Heaven blest Souls will have a more full and clear sight of him, yet, there we cannot know him fully. So far as our enlarged Capacity shall enable us then to know him, we shall, as then we shall in an open Vision *see him as he is.* Which knowledge will be perfect as to us, because we are not capable of more. But it can never be possible to a finite Creature, tho' perfectly happy, fully and perfectly to know him, who

1 *Cor.* xiii, 12. 1 *Joh.* iii, 2.

is

is Infinite, and therefore unknowable in the Glory of his Essence and Perfections, to any but himself.

But, tho' God is not to be known by us in the foregoing particulars, yet it is doubtless possible to us, to know God, else to know him must cease to be our Duty. For so just and gracious is He, as not to make any thing Mans Duty, which he cannot by his present Abilities perform, nor by that further strength and Ability, he has promised to give to those that wait upon him. And therefore to know God in the Sense of our Text, may import these 4 things at least.

1. Firmly and stedfastly to believe the Being and Existance of God, who, tho' he cannot be known perfectly, Yet there is such a knowledge of him attainable, as is necessary to all, and is very gustfull to a Pious Soul. Know God, i. e. believe for in Scripture Knowledge and belief is often one and the same thing. Settle thy self therefore in a firm perswasion of such a Being, Faith will believe what the Eye doth not see, and fix on him who is Invisible. For *thro' Faith we understand* (or know) *that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God.* And here we may observe, (1) By Faith we know that there is a God. (2) That by his Word it is, that the Worlds are made. Therefore since Faith is so very Excellent and Useful, whatever thou looosest, suffer not thy soul to be ravag'd of thy Faith. It is better to loose a Crown, than to loose thy Faith. As it is by Faith only we can know God, and that rather in believing there is such a Being, than from any knowledge we have, or account we can give of his Essence.

Isai. liii, 11. *Heb.* xi, 6. V. 3.

2. Know God, that is, maintain apprehensions every way suitable to the Revelation and discoveries he hath given us of himself, which are sufficient to furnish us with a knowledge of him. View him in his works and we shall soon believe and know

know that every thing was made by him, not only from the admirable Character of himſelf ſtampt on every individual of them, but from the great variety of things, and that perfect and exact order in which all are made, which duly conſidered, muſt needs convince, and force us to confeſs, that leſs than Infinite Wiſdom could not frame, nor leſs than Almighty Power could produce all into Being. His workes are a demonſtration of his Exiſtance; For ſays the Royal Pſalmiſt, *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work.* Further, he hath diſcovered himſelf in his Word, more fully than by his works, tho' by the ſerious view and thought of his works we may come to know that there is a God, the Author of them, (as the Heathen did) and as our Apoſtle argues, *That every houſe is built by ſome man, but he that built all things is God.* Yet they cannot help us to any certain Idea of him, further than that he is an Infinitaly wiſe, and all Powerful Being. Wherefore, the Philoſophers *when they knew God, they glorify'd him not as God, but became vain in their Imaginations.* But his Word, as it is a more excellent knowledge of himſelf, by which as in a mirrour we may take a View of the perfections of his Nature. And that he did not only create, but upholds, that he is a very kind and univerſal Benefactor, who cloaths and feeds all ranks of Creatures, from the higheſt Prince to the very Inſect, yea, that he is very gracious to poor Sinners, ready to forgive, and not only willing, but deſirous to be reconcil'd, that we might be happy in his bleſſing and favour.

Pſ. xix. 1.

Heb. iii. 4.

Rom. i. 19, 20, 21.

lively beam, ſo it yeildeth more ex

3. Know him in the Emanations, and flowings forth of his grace and goodneſs towards thee, ſo as to love and praiſe him, this is to know him to purpoſe. The Heathen may know him in his works, Profeſſors may have a more excellent knowledge of him by his Word, more enlightening, who for all

all that, may be under the Dominion of Satan, and may have no more ſenſe of God upon their heart, than a Parrot hath underſtanding in the things he is taught to ſpeak of. But to know God in the power of his Grace, conquering in us all averſion to himſelf, making us ready and willing to ſerve him, to taſte the ſweetneſs of his Fruites, to retain the reliſhes of his Love, ſtreaming forth in the manifold bleſſings of it, is to know him for our ſelves. This will diſpoſe us with the Church, *To ſit down under his ſhadow with great delight.* And even force us, as in a rapture, to ſay, as *Thomas* did upon Chriſts condeſcending to his weekneſs, *My Lord, & my God.* It is very ſad to conſider the many and valuable Bleſſings, God dayly beſtows on Men, who enjoy them, and generally abuſe themſelves in the uſe of them, without regarding him from whom they come, or the tribute due unto him for them, like Swine that eat up the Acrons but look not to the Tree that drops them. But to know God in the Senſations of his goodneſs, and to love and praiſe him for them, is both our duty and priviledge.

Cant. ii, 3. *Job.* xx, 28.

4. Know him, in his Righteous Dominion, which Entitles him to an undoubted, and ſole right of diſpenſing Laws, and appointing ordinances for his own Worſhip and ſervice, and to a Univerſal Obſervance of them, for any under what pretext ſoever, to change his Ordinances, is boldly to invade his Dominions, to break in upon his prerogative, and to ſnatch away that branch of it, that is Inſeparable from his Soveraignty. Earthly Princes will not endure to be touched in what they are ſo tender of, and tho' ſome have preſumed, thus to deal with God (by a power they never receiv'd from him) yet how they will account with him for ſuch preſumption is worthy of conſideration, and may caution others for the future

future. Therefore acknowledge him to be thy Sovereign Lord, so as to obey and serve him, by a delightful Application of thy self, to do his whole pleasure, who hath a more just claim to thee, and thy homage, than thou my Son, (as we may understand *David* saying) or any Prince whatever can make to the Observance of their People. *Solomon*, remember, God hath chosen thee, to the Honour and Dignity of succeeding me in the Throne, and he only can Establish thee, and thy Kingdom, *Who setteth up, and casteth down Princes at his Pleasure.* If thou honourest him, he will garison thee from evil, and make thee and thy People prosperous. But if thou neglectest and forsakest him, he will shake thy confidence, besiege thee with dangers, and that which is worse, He will cast thee off for ever. Therefore *my Son, know thou the God of thy Father.* I proceed *Psalm* cii, 10.

Secondly. To shew you that this knowledge of God is most Excellent in it self. Whatever we esteem excellent, we are apt to acquaint ourselves with, and busy our selves about, and the true reason why Men set so little by the Knowledge of God, is, they make no account of him, He is not in their Esteem, but contrary wise, they contemn and treat him as unworthy of their regard, which doubtless must be the fruit of Ignorance and Folly. But let Men in their madness think, and say, what they will, 'tis certain the Knowledge of God is most excellent which we shall demonstrate by considering.

1. The transcendant excellency of God, the object of whom we may say as *Moses* in his Song, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the Gods, who is like thee:* Not one in Heaven or Earth fit to be compared to him, as he infinitely exceeds all, in every thing both great and good. He is the Original of all. Whatsoever is Excellent and Admira- *Exod.* xv, 11. *Psalm* lxxxix, 6.

ble in the Angels of Heaven, in Men and Monarchs on Earth, it is but a drop, a beam, a Ray that proceeds from him who is the fountain of all. He is ſupream to all in Purity and Holineſs which is his Crown and glory. The farther any Being is from Sin (which only is Evil in it ſelf) the more excellent is that being, therefore the Lord tranſ-
1 *Sam.* ii, 2. cends all others, of whom *Hannah* truly ſaid, *There is none Holy as the Lord.* Tho' Angels and good Men are Holy in their meaſure, yet it falls Infinitely ſhort of His, yea, the higheſt holineſs of Creatures, is nothing in compariſon of Gods perfect purity, who in their Anthems ſung to his ho-
Rev. xv, 4. nour, affirm and ſay, *That thou only art holy*, i. e. Abſolutely and Unchangeable Holy:

Acts xv, 18. *Iſai.* xli, 22, 23. Alſo, he excells all others in Wiſdom and Underſtanding, he knows every thing knowable at once, whether paſt preſent, or to come, and ſuch Knowledge is peculiar to him. He knows the plots of the Wicked, how to defeat the moſt ſubtile and Crafty, *and to deliver the Godly out of Temptation:*

Pſalm lxxxix, 8. *Gen.* xviii, 14 *Mat.* x, 27. *Pſalm* xxxiii, 6 *Jud.* 6. *Luk.* i, 52. Yea, he excels all others in might and power, *O Lord God of Hoſts* (ſays *David*) *who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee.* To whom there is not any thing hard or difficult, much leſs too hard for him, who, by his *Fiat*, Commanded into Being whatſoever he pleaſed, tumbled Legions of Apoſtate Angels out of Heaven, binds them in Chains, and his Enemies in Fetters of Iron. *He caſteth down the Mighty from their Seats, and exalteth them of low degree.*

1 *Jam.* i, 17. *Pſ.* cxlv, 9. Nay, he excels all others in Mercy and goodneſs, not only as he is the Original of all, *From whom*, as *St. James* ſaith, *cometh every good and Perfect gift.* But as he is Univerſally good, good to all, to Saints and Sinners, to Friends and Enemies, all are partakers of his bounty. He tenders

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Sinners, pardons the Penitent, takes him into favour, carrases him with his Embraces, kisses him (as it were) with the kisses of his Mouth, whereby he assures Pious Souls, that e're long he will raise them to glory. In a word, and that which sweetens all, is, that he is immutably good. Angels are not so absolute, but they may change, and who knows not, but Men do change and alter, but God cannot; no, *The goodness of the Lord endures for ever.* And as in these, so he transcends all in truth and faithfulness. Who, by way of distinction and Eminence is called *the faithful God,* whose *faithfulness reacheth to the Heavens.* Men are often deceitful, perfidious, and false, nay, a Brother is not to be trusted in, but if the Lord promises, he will perform. *He is faithful that hath promised.*

Psalm lii, 1. *Deut.* vii, 9. *Psalm* xxxvi, 5. *Heb:* x, 23.

Besides, what can recommend the Excellency of God more to us, than that he is proposed the Object of the Knowledge of all, yea, of those Men, whom Providence has placed in the highest form, and made Kings, and Gods (as it were) too, and over others in this World, amongst, whom, there is not any good, and Wise enough, who know not God, as the knowledge of him most powerfully restrains Men from the Extravagancies they are prone to. *Solomon* when he refus'd to know, (or rather to retain the knowledge of) the Lord in his mind, he gave up himself *to know Madness and Folly,* which he frankly confessed, and that the most perfect knowledge of things under the Sun, while the Knowledge of God is neglected, is no better than Madness, producing little else then grief and sorrow. *Eccl.* i, 13. to the end.

II. The Knowledge of God is Excellent from the delight he takes in it, it is one part of his Excellency to take pleasure only in what is so, and amongst all things that bear that Character, and

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are accounted Excellent. I know not any thing, save the Righteous Life, and Meritorious Death of Christ, that God is more delighted in, and pleased with, than the Knowledge of himself, nay, the Knowledge of himself, was, what he had next at heart, as he made the Life and Death of the ever Blessed Jesus, a means to effect it in the World, where there is not any thing excellent, in comparison of that. Not *the Sacrifices of Flesh, nor the blood and fat of Fed Beasts, not Incense from Sheba, or sweet Cane from a far Country*, nay the most costly sacrifices, the painful services, and whole burnt offerings, are but trivial, and of no account with him, who says, *I desire Mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt Offerings.*

Hos. vi, 6.

III. It is most Excellent, as it is not only delightful to God, but most pleasing and gustful to the Soul, for if as the wise Man tells us, *That its a pleasant thing to behold the light*, Which Men have confessed, especially when they have been long confin'd to a Dungeon, and the Sun hath cast its beams into it, tho' but thro' a small crevis, how they draw nigh unto it, as that which is most delightful and refreshing? Much more, when a poor Sinner has been long in the darkness of a sinfull state, and hath the beams of Spiritual light and knowledge shining into the Soul, discovering its own deformity and misery, the Excellency of God, the fulness of his Grace in Christ, admitting us to taste the sweetnes of his Love, in forgiving Iniquity, in sanctifying our Nature, accepting our Person and Services, and settling us in a hope of Glory. O what so refreshing and comforting! In comparison of this, *Paul* accounts *of all his Excellencies but as dung*. Yea, the Prophet proposes this, as only fit to be glory'd in, saying, *Let not the Wise Man glory in his Wisdom, nor the Rich Man in his Riches, nor the Mighty Man in his Strength, but let him that*

Eccl. xi, 7.

have

Phil. iii, 8.

Jer. ix, 23.

that glorieth, glory in this, that he knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, &c.

IV. It is most excellent, considering that it is his great design by all the Methods of his grace to instruct us into the knowledg of himself, particularly, in sending our Blessed Saviour into the World, who, as the Apostle tells us, is *the brightness of his Fathers Glory, the Express Image of his Person.* He came not to make us Wise and learned in the Wisdom of this World, nor to Instruct us how we might possess our selves with the treasures of it, nor to make us noble and honourable therein, but to propagate in us the Knowledge of his Father, by his Doctrine, by his Example, and by his Death. In all which he design'd to bring us near unto God, and the nearer we come to the Object, the more clear and distinct sights and knowledge we have of it. For this end also he gives his Word and Holy Spirit, that by their conjoyned Influences and operations on the Soul, the dark Clouds and Fogs of Ignorance might be dispersst, and our understandings freed by Grace, from those Impediments, that hinder our growing up in the knowledge of God, since his *light is risen, and shines upon us.* Heb. 1,3. Isai. lx, 1,2,3.

V. It is excellent, if we consider the special Influence it will have upon us, how very useful and serviceable it will be to us in the many great and good things it will do in and for us. If Men usually measure the preciousness of things, by their usefulness, then we may say of the Knowledge of God, as *David* did of *Goliahs* sword, *there is none like that,* as it will in some good measure effect in these 6 or 7 things at least. 1 Samu. iv, 9.

1. Humility, it will lay the sinner low, mightily sink and abase the Soul. The knowledge of God Scatters the Mists of Ignorance, which blinds the Understanding; 'tis that light which discovers

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to us our own vileneſs and deformity by Sin, with the miſery of it, which is no ſooner apprehended, but it pulls down the high Creſt, and lays low the moſt proud and haughty in Nature. How humble did the poor prodigal come, when he return'd to his Wits, and came to himſelf, remembring his *Luk.* xv. Fathers Houſe and the fulneſs that was there! How did it break *Manaſſah* into pieces, which nothing elſe could do, his heart by his revolt from God, being harder than the Nether Milſtone! But when by Affliction he was brought to know the Lord, and what a God he had provoked by his Rebellions, even him, by whom the ſtrongeſt Monarchs, (if wicked) will be certainly baffled when he enters the liſts with 'em, he no ſooner took hold of ſword and gauntlet, but King *Manaſſah* yields the day, in that; *he humbled himſelf greatly*. Without doubt the more a Man ſees and knows of God, the more he ſinks into humility and ſelf-abhorrence.

2 Cro. xxxiii, 12, 13. *Job* xlii, 5, 6. *Iſai.* vi, 5.

2. As it will caſt us down on the one hand, ſo it will work us up into the likeneſs of Men, yea of God himſelf on the other. But perhaps you may wonder what I mean, and may ſay, hath Man than by looſing the Knowledge of God, and by ſinking into worſe than a brutiſh Ignorance transform'd himſelf into ſome other Rank of Beings, hath he loſt the form and Nature of a Man to which I anſwer: The Form or Figure of Man, we retain, tho' that is but the Shadow, and not the Man, but thereby the noble Nature of Man in his Original is loſt, in which happy ſtate he was void of all evil habits, free from inclinations to any thing noxious and hurtful, and prone to every thing beneficial and good, until he was beguiled by the Serpent But now the caſe is quite otherwiſe, as is ſadly experienc'd by all, in that Men Act under the Power of Ignorance and

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cious inclinations more like Bedlams, than Men of Reson and Religion, Irregularly and perniciously, having transform'd themselves into Beasts, yea, Beast of Prey, whose Nature is virulaut and Savage, as they are not only Injurious to themselves by gratifying their base Lusts and Passions, living in pleasure, Prophaneness, Drunkness, Uncleaness, Covetiousness, Immorality and Rebellion, but are hurtful and destructive to others. As from their enmity they hate one another, from their Ambition they sack and undermine, and from their Mercinarines and Cruelty (that infests and vexes the World) they hurt, and many times ruin one another. And as these with all the mad freiks that Men (and Mobbs) are guilty of, are the Consequences of Ignorance, so, the knowledge of God, would in a great measure cure all these, restore Men to the rectitude of his Original Excellency, intirely reconcile, and unite 'em in a league of true friendship, rendering 'em benign, and profitable to each other, answering that Character the Prophet gives of Christians in Gospel-times, when he says, *The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid: and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the Lion shall eat straw like the Ox. And the sucking Child shall play on the hole of the Asp. And the weaned Child stall put his hand on the Cockatrice Den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all Gods Holy Mountain.* Here is a happy change indeed, but how comes it to pass? why he tells us, *The Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord.* From hence it is that sinners are wrought up into the likeness of Man in his Original, and do Govern 'emselves in some measure by the same noble Principles of Religion and Humanity, so desireable to God. *Isai.* xi. 6, 7, 8. *Hos.* vi. 6.

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And not only so, but it works him up into the likeness of God himself, the knowledge of whom will powerfully mould and transform the Soul into his Image, work a thorough change in, and make us quite other creatures then we were before, leading us into a conformity to him, who is the Object of our knowledge. True it is, from the blindness of our understanding and the power of Ignorance *we were alienated from the life of God, and walked according to the course of this World.* But it is the Knowledge of God, whereby we are formed a new after his Image, and that furnishes the Soul with a new frame, effectually disposing us to suppress evil propensions, to lay aside evil habits, to abandon sinful practices, and to grow up into the likeness of himself. *For we all,* (as the Apostle says) *with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image,* &c.

Eph. iv, 18. chap. ii, 2. 2 Cor. xiii, 18.

3. The Knowledge of God will work in our hearts strong love and Affection to himself, for which purpose Natural knowledge, or the knowledge of natural things, tho' it be very great, will be insignificant, 'tis true, this kind of knowledge may furnish a Man with pretty notions, pleasing speculations, and render him acceptable in Conversation. But it will never awake our Affections so, as to give them Motion God-ward, and to fix upon him, tho' he be the sum of all beauty, yea, Amiableness it self. But to know him who is supreamly excellent, must needs kindle in us suitable affections to him. To know him in the destributions of his love and grace, cannot be without loving him, *who first loved us,* and that a time when we were so unlovely *that no one pitied us. David* knew him answering his Prayers, and therefore he resolves to love him more than ever. *Mary Magdalen* knew him in the power of his Grace, casting out of her seven Devils, and pardoning her ma-

1 Joh. iv, 19. Ezek. xvi. Ps cxvi, 2. Luk. vii 47.

many sins, wherefore *she loved much.* The Spouse sensible of his love in the benefits of his Favour which she compares *to an Oyntment poured forth,* the Saviour whereof was so endearing and ravishing, that the next thing we hear, is, *The Virgins love thee.* To know thus, and not to love him, is not possible. St. *John* telling us, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.* *Cant.* i, 3. 1 *Joh.* iv, 8.

4. The knowledge of God, will put us upon Duty, and make us active to express in the Life, what is in the Heart, as a right knowledge of him worketh affection, so affection breaks forth into Action, it being the property of Love, to do any thing, yea, every thing that may please the beloved, which our Blessed Saviour intimates, saying, *He that loveth me, will keep my sayings.* Without obedience correspondent to our knowledge of him, we are but Ignorant, tho' our speculations were as sublime as those of Devils. No doubt but *Ely's* Sons had a knowledge of God and his Law by Education, their constant attendance at his Alter, and their dayly ministring before him, in the Priests Office, by reason of which great Favour and honour bestow'd on 'em, they were under the stronger obligation to maintain a most exemplary decorum, (as all Ministers are) but contrary wise, they were so notoriously vile in their Behaviour, that the Lord, notwithstanding their honour and advancement lays them low enough, as he fixes a Brand of Infamy upon 'em, calling them *Sons of Belial,* i. e. of wickedness, and the reason of their audacious and scandalous practices, is, *They know not me saith the Lord.* Ministers who either do, or ought to know more of God, than others, if their conversation be not answerable thereto, namely, Holy and Exemplary. 'Tis certain they know him not, and are no other than Mountabanks, and mere Pretenders. The Apostle telling us, *He that saith* *Joh.* xiv, 21, 23.

1 Joh. ii, 4. *I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

5. The knowledge of God will work in us Affiance, and powerfully dispose us to trust in him, in whom there is every thing requisite to render him the only worthy object of our confidence, Ps. ix, 10. from which Consideration *David* says, *That they who know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee.* Such as know him in his Power, Love, and Faithfulness, will trust him in all, with all; and for all, in every state and condition, whether prosperous or adverse, as prosperity will not raise a pious Man above the actings of his Faith in God, so adversity shall not sink him below it. No, says *Job*, under Job xiii, 15. a very sore Tryal, *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* Such a Soul will trust God with all, with himself, his life, his affairs, and the Issues of them Jer. x, 23. knowing, *That its not in Man that walketh to direct his own steps.* Even so, he will trust him for all, and will not suspect his love, who hath promised supplyes, nor his faithfulness to perform, since *he will never forsake them that seek him.*

6. It will loosen our hearts, and mightily wean our affections from the things of this World, the Disciples seeing Christ transfigured, which was but a very faint shew of the glory of God, were so far transported, as in a rapture to say, *Lord, it is good for us to be here.* Loath were they to descend from the Mount, to converse with the Men and things of the Earth, accounting them no way worthy of their love, and regard. Much more to know God in the riches of his grace and Excellent Glory, will so quash and cool our affections as to make us even careless what becomes of the Earth, and work in us a Holy contempt of the things of it. The Primitive Christians *suffer'd joyfully the loss of all*, while they by faith took a view of those Heb. x, 34. better things, *And more enduring substance they had*

Heaven. Others accounted their ſufferings under bloody perſecutors *to be light and momentary, while they looked at God and things unſeen.* And St. *Paul* once admitted to a ſight of the Excellent Glory, being taken up into the third Heavens, ſo deadned his affections to the World, that when he was ſet down again, had not the Lord humbled him, by a Meſſenger of Satan, 'tis probable he had behaved himſelf quite different, to other good Men, have prided himſelf in his Viſions and Revelations, and perhaps have ſpoken of things unlawful for him. But tho' he was thus prevented by Affliction, and made ſenſible he now was on Earth, and not in Heaven, ſo ſwallowed up with Viſions, that he knew not *whether he was in the Body, or out of the Body.* Yet ſuch an Impreſſion did that ſight of God and Glory make upon him, that while he was in the World, he ſcarcely ever ſpoke of himſelf, as other than a dead Man, ſo mortify'd in his deſires to and after the things of the Earth, that he regarded 'em lit le more, than a dead Man doth the Actions of this Life, ſays he, *I am crucify'd to the World*, &c.

2 *Cor.* iv, 18.

2 *Cor.* xii. to the 12 *vers.*

Gal. vi, 14.

7. The knowledg of God, of all other things is moſt uſeful to work in Pious Souls ardent deſires to, and after him. Man, whilſt here, will have ſomething, which he accounts his chief good, and it's certain, that they, who know God, will fix on him only, diſdaining to ſet any upon the level with him, as there is none fit to be compared with him, therefore *David* declares upon a deliberate thought of things, *That there is none in Heaven but God, nor any on Earth he deſires beſides him.* This will make us lively and vigorous in our ſeeking him in his ordinances while we live, nay, it will ſo far reconcile us to death, as to make us willing to die, as that which is beſt, death putting good Men into the preſence of their God, which brings me to

VI. And last thing, by which I design to shew you that the knowledge of God is most excellent, and that is the blessedness whereunto it tends, which is Eternal Life and Happiness, as our Blessed Saviour saith, *This is Eternal Life, that we may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Now, if as we usually say, that's well, that ends well, then, what more excellent since to know God, is Heaven and happiness begun here, and will be compleated in a more clear sight, and perfect knowledge of him in Heaven hereafter. I now pass in the

Joh. xvii, iii.

Third place, to shew, that it is necessary to every one of us. And tho' enough has been said to evince the truth of that, we shall notwithstanding in a few particulars shew you wherein it is so. And,

First. The knowledge of God is necessary, as it will guard us against, and secure us from the power and dominion of Sin. Altho' the Being of Sin is not removed, but does consist, with the fullest knowledge of God, the most mortify'd Christian ever attained to in this life. Yet it's certain, that they who live and Act under the power of Sin, are Ignorant of God. The Reason why Men bring *forth* the bitter fruits of a vicious Life, *and proceed forth evil to evil, is because they know not the Lord.* The knowledge of whom lays such restraints on those who are acquainted with him in his Holiness and Justice, in his Omnipotence and Omniscience, his rewards, and terrours &c. as renders it hard and difficult, yea almost impossible for such to Sin by choice and allowance, but will rather baffle the most charming temptation in demanding, as *Joseph* of his alluring Mistriss, *How can I do this great Wickedness and Sin against God.*

Jer. ix, 1.

Gen. xxxix, 9.

Secondly. It is necessary as it will poyse the Soul, and keep it upon the Balance under every chang

charge that posse,s upon our Persons, or Fortunes in this World, which does little else but ring changes upon us from the great uncertainty of all things in it, no Man being sure, he shall to morrow enjoy what he calls his own, and is Master of to day, as *not knowing what a day may bring forth.* And when Men of the World fall under disappointments, and sustain the loss of their beloved enjoyments, how grievous and unsufferable is it to them, it afflicts their Bodies, torments their minds, renders 'em eas-less and rest-less, fills them with complaint and sorrow, makes them to conclude they are undone, and truly sometimes it happens as their excess of sorrow and fear breaks their constitution, throws them into melancholy, and makes them a prey to death, and all for want of a God to stay themselves upon. And when prosperity attends them, how are they puft up therewith, like a blader with wind, and full of conceit of themselves, their own conduct and managements, ascribing their successes to their own Wisdom and Prudence, denying, at least forgetting the God of their mercies!

Pro. xxvii, 1.

But the knowledge of God will keep the Soul on the balance from the inconveniences of these Ups and Downs. As it will make us humble in prosperity, look back to the Rock out of which we were hewed. And in memory of our Original (dust of the Earth) will say, with *David*, under our highest advancements, *What am I O Lord God, and what is my Fathers House, that thou hast brought me hitherto* &c. On the other hand, if at any time a Pious Soul is under distress from pressing feares of Enemies and dangers approaching, she will in such a case *stay and quiet herself in the Lord God, knowing* that he can sustain us under, protect us in, and deliver us out of all our troubles when he pleases. Nay, suppose a Person who knows the Lord, be-

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actually stript of his all, he will not repine and murmur at providence, or charge God foolishly, but will be calm and quiet, as one resign'd to his disposal, building still upon his Goodness for Food and Raymeut, with resignation and content. And if at any time such a one be dejected for a while, yet after a little pause, he will gain a recovery, and frame an Anthem to his praise, as *Job* did, saying, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

Job i, 21.

Thirdly. It is necessary, as there is no serving him, (at least) in a right manner without it, unless we know God, so, as to make him the Object of our Faith, of our Love and desire, we shall never acknowledge him the Object of our Worship and service. The ground of *Pharaoh's* refusing to obey the Lord, was his Ignorance, says he, *I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* And *Paul's* not knowing Christ was the reason of his persecuting him, in his Church and Members, who, meeting with him in the way, and demanding of *Saul Why he persecuted him?* his first enquiry was, *Who art thou Lord?* to which Christ had no sooner reply'd, informing him who he was, but his next enquiry is, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* evident it is, where God is not known, he is not served, and to the end that Men may serve him, *Paul* infers the Necessity of knowing him, saying, *He that comes unto him, must believe* (or know) *that he is.* But if Men who know not God, should by chance fix upon him, as the Object of their Worship, it is not possible they should hit upon the manner also or worship him aright, any more than the superstitious *Athenians* did, on whose Altar the Apostle found this Inscription, *To the unknown God.*

Exod. v, 2.

Acts ix.

Heb. xi, 6.

Acts xxii, 23.

Fourthly. The Knowledge of God is Necessary, as it will have a mighty Influence on the Spirit and Behaviour of Men, and effectually dispose

Men

Men of all ranks, to govern 'emselves in such a manner as to be obliging and serviceable to one another. This will make Princes wise, to Rule in Righteousness, to abhor oppression, and in their whole Administration to approve 'emselves *the Ministers of God, for good to their People.* And it will make Subjects steadily Loyal and Obedient to their Sovereign, not as it is now adays with many, who last Year in a Noisy manner cry'd up *Non-Resistance*, who are restless this year, and if they could would wrest the Scepter out of their Sovereigns hand, by their factious *Mobs*, and *Traiterous Schemes*, but to hate Resistance. So in all other Relations the knowledge of God will powerfully engage Men in their whole conversation, to be inoffensive and beneficial. But

Fifthly, and lastly, It is necessary as our compleat and perfect happiness will consist in the perfect knowledge and clear Vision of God hereafter. Whatever Men think of a state of Ignorance, I know not. But sure I am, it is not so pleasing now; as it will be dis-tastful, *when Christ shall be revealed in flaming Fire, to take vengeance on them who know not God.* A State of Ignorance finally persever'd in, is a lost State. And tho' many doubtless do know God with such a knowledg as hath been described in the Power of his Grace, and Communications of his Love and Goodness, and to be their God in Covenant, on which Account they are happy above others, yet their happiness is but very Imperfect, as they know but in part. But in Heaven they shall know as they are known, be admitted to an open, clear, and Eternal Vision, and nothing there shall interrupt our View and Enjoyment of him. Our happiness shall be perfect, as there we shall be like him, for *we shall see him, as he is.* I now conclude with 2 or 3 Reflections. And

2 *Thess.* i. 8, 9. 2 *Cor.* iv, 4.

1 *Joh.* iii, 2.

First.

First. I Infer hence, the ſupream excellency of God, who is recommended not only to meer Men, but to Princes and Monarchs as the only worthy Object of their Study and knowledge. *Like unto whom (as* Moſes *ſaid) there is not any amongſt the Gods.* Whoſe glory has exalted him above the Heavens, and placed him not only above the conceptions of Men, but of Bleſſed Angels whom they continually adore. It is he, whom Men of the Higheſt Rank and greateſt Dignity in the World, Yea, whom Men, no leſs good then great, do glory in, as their higheſt happineſs, and whom they recommend to their Beloved Children, as their only and ſure Guide, and beſt Inheritance, and to whom Homage is due from Crowned Heads, as well as others, which *David* acknowledgeth, ſaying, *And thou* Solomon *my Son, know thou the God of thy Father and ſerve him.*

Secondly. That it is our trueſt Intereſt, and greateſt ſecurity and happineſs to know and ſerve him, as thereby we ſhall be greatly pleaſur'd and profited with an Enjoyment of himſelf, who is Infinitely the beſt. If we ſerve him as the Effect of our knowing him. He will adopt us into his houſe he will treat us as his Children, he will ſatisfie us with his Favour here, and his Glory hereafter. We ſhall have his ear open to all our ſuits, and our requeſts granted, *For if we ſeek him, he will be found by us.*

But by this time, ſome are perhaps enquiring, or deſirous to know by what means they may gain the true knowledge of God, to which I anſwer. (1) Contemplate his Works, look above you, beneath you, and round about you. Behold and view the Wonders of his Hands, in them you may ſee and know him, who is Inviſible, even *his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

Rom. i, 20.

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Secondly. View him in the glaſs of his Word (the Holy Scriptures) Read them, and ſtudy him, much in the revelation he hath given us of himſelf therein. Faith in, or knowledge of him comes thereby, God by his Word is more truly perſented to us in his Nature and Properties, than the Perſon of a Man can poſſibly be in the moſt lively picture drawn of him. I have heard, that a late Monarch coming into the apartment of one of his Nobles, and ſeing a large Bible lie there, he ſaid to him, My Lord, do you read this Book, I have left reading this Book long ſince. But if it was ſo, what could be more contrary to the Duty of Princes, who are enjoyn'd to read therein all the days of there lives, that they might govern in the fear of God, and for the good of their People. *Deut.* xvii, 18, 19, 20. And who may not believe it was ſo, that conſiders what a Scene of Wickedneſs his Reign opened, how Ignorance and ſuperſtition prevailed, and a general corruption of manners was encourag'd and countenanc'd, *When the proud were counted happy, and thoſe that work'd wickedneſs were ſet up.* But it was quite otherways with Holy *David*, who ſaid, *I will not know* (i. e. approve) *a wicked Perſon, thoſe who tell lies and worked deceit ſhall not abide in my ſight, mine Eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, and thoſe only who walk uprightly in the way ſhall ſerve me.* And was it not for this that Male Miniſters envy'd and maligned him, and caus'd him ſo much trouble and fear by the Wicked Inventions they privily hatch'd and treacherously carry'd on againſt him. And is it for any other cauſe in our Soyereign Lord King *George*, but the like Religious, and Generous Reſolution to hate the Wicked and to protect the Godly, that a late ſet of Men (ſo lately abandon'd) do with their adherents ſo trayterously conſpire againſt his Perſon and Government, as of late hath appeared in *Pſ.* ci.

Favour of I know not what, more than their own avarice, a darling for which they wou'd have betray'd the Nation into Popery and Slavery, had not God kindly sent our King to save and deliver us from so great Misery.

Thirdly. Be earnest in prayer to God, that he wou'd manifest himself to thy Soul, he only can and will do it, if we seek him according to his Word, believingly. And now e're we conclude, Who will not pray for our King as well from the bond of Gratitude, as Duty, especially, since Royal examples are so conducive to promote the Knowledge of God? Has he not in effect more than once, told us from the Throne, that he will protect all his People in their just Rights, and that they may be as good and happy as they will? Besides consider the burdens which press him from the ill behaviour of an ungrateful People, who contrary to the solemneties of Oaths, have stir'd up Rebellion by tumultuous Rioters disturbing the Peace of his Government, and whereby they invite his Enemies from abroad to Invade his Dominions; which to prevent or defeat, must cost him both care and pains. Pray therefore that God would graciously protect his Person, direct his Councels, prosper his Armes, make him Victorious, grant him a long and happy Reign over a Peaceful ond a Loyal People, that the Scepter in his hand may be a terrour to his and our Enemies; and that on his own head, his Crown may long flourish.

Fourthly. Diligently improve what knowledg of God you have, Tallents improv'd encrease, the Lord says, *They shall know, that follow on to know*, and that *such as seek for the knowledge of God, as for hid treasure, shall find.*

Thirdly. And to conclude. From the premises we may learn, that wilfully to neglect the means of knowing

knowing him who is ſupreamly excellent, would be to treat the ever Bleſſed God, with the fowleſt contempt we are capable, and to proclaim ourſelves the greateſt Fools by ſuch a neglect, as thereby (in our Ignorance) we publiſh him the leaſt deſirable, as we prefer our carnal intereſts above, and the pleaſing our luſts before him. But what may ſuch expect on their thus forſaking the Lord, *But to be caſt off for ever.* And by the weight of this wrath to be ſunk into miſery, no leſs diſmal than Eternal. Which to avoid, let us all ſtudy to know God in his Righteous Dominion, who *has prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* By ſubmitting our ſelves to him in the Obedience of his will, and to the diſpoſing of his providence. Whoſe will alone is the Standard of the Obedience not only of Men and Monarchs, but of bleſſed Angels alſo, of whom it's ſaid, *they do his Commandments, hearkening to the Voice of his Word.* Let us all do ſo, from the Prince to the peaſant, ſo ſhall our King be compaſs'd about with Salvation, *and Peace ſhall be upon Iſrael.* Which God of his Mercy grant, and that we all may know the God of our (Royal) Father, and ſerve him.

Pſ. ciii, 19.

v. 20.

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